

# A THIRTEENTH-CENTURY ICON WITH A VARIANT OF THE HODEGETRIA IN THE BYZANTINE MUSEUM OF ATHENS

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The group of thirteenth-century painted icons that may be connected with the artistic activity of Cyprus has recently been enriched by a large panel depicting a variant of the Hodegetria (Figs. 1 and 7), presently in the Byzantine Museum of Athens. The Cypriot origin of this icon, for which a detailed argumentation will follow, gains special support from its pedigree. The icon was made known to scholars by the exhibition organized at the Byzantine Museum in 1984 for the centennial of the Christian Archaeological Society.<sup>1</sup> More precisely, the original painting was revealed in 1979 after the removal of a later layer of painting (Fig. 2) from an icon that was kept in a chapel dedicated to the Panagia Zygoti on Mount Parnassus near Delphi. The chapel is a metochion of the Monastery of Jerusalem, dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin, on the east slope of Parnassus, a few kilometers to the north of the village of Davlia in the area of Levadia. This connection acquires special interest owing to the fact that the monastery in question was from 1766 until 1905 a dependency of the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai.<sup>2</sup> The

close contacts of Sinai with Cyprus, as inferred from the written sources and the artistic works preserved at the monastery, corroborate the Cypriot affiliations of the icon under discussion.

The panel of the Virgin and Child measures 117.5 cm in height; its width is 75 cm in the upper part and 74 in the lower part; the thickness of the panel is approximately 3 cm. The panel consists of two boards of equal width. The icon's border was augmented in the upper part by the addition of an extra strip of wood measuring 2.5 cm in height and 2.6 cm in thickness. Extra strips of wood were also added at the remaining sides, as can be inferred from the existing holes, but these strips were removed at a later period. The figure of the Virgin is damaged in the lower left section, specifically in the area where an extra piece of rectangular wood was added, presumably to replace the lost section of the original wooden support. The wood used for the panel is all of the same type and belongs to a coniferous species.

In this icon of the Virgin and Child the paint has been applied upon a layer of gesso that overlies a piece of canvas. A layer of gesso and canvas was also applied on the reverse side of the icon in the areas that had fissures. The canvas on the back of the panel, a very rare feature in icon paintings, was

<sup>1</sup>See the catalogue of the exhibition for the Centennial of the Christian Archaeological Society, Byzantine Museum (Athens, 1984), no. 5, p. 16 (in Greek) (entry by Myrtali Acheimastou-Potamianou), with a color reproduction and a detail in black and white. I would like to thank Dr. Myrtali Acheimastou-Potamianou, Director of the Byzantine Museum, for providing the photograph of Fig. 1.

<sup>2</sup>The monastery, with a very old history as can be inferred from various types of evidence, was reconstituted, after a period of desertion, around the middle of the 18th century. For a brief account of the history of the monastery, see K. N. Papamichalopoulos, 'Ανέκδοτα έγγραφα καὶ ἐπιγράφαί τῆς ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σινᾷ Μονῆς, Δελτ. Ἐτ. Ἑλλ. 7 (1918), 498–512; idem, 'Ἡ Μονὴ τοῦ Ὁρους Σινᾶ (Athens, 1932), 291–99; G. D. Tsevas, 'Ιστορία τῶν Θηβῶν καὶ τῆς Βοιωτίας, II (Athens, 1928), 422–23; D. Xanatalos, 'Ανέκδοτον χειρόγραφον περὶ τῆς Μονῆς Δαυλείας (Ἱερουσαλήμ), Ἑπ. Ἐτ. Βυζ. Σπ. 13 (1937), 371–84;

T. Lappas, Βοιωτικὰ Μοναστήρια (Athens, 1950), esp. 41–50; and T. Gritsopoulos, Δαυλείας, Μονή, in Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ Ἱστορικὴ Ἑγκυκλοπαίδεια 4 (1964), cols. 973–75. The name of the monastery and its later affiliation with Sinai suggest connections with Jerusalem at an earlier period. It may be noted that the entire area of Phocis and up to Levadia has preserved a number of monastic settlements and chapels dedicated to Jerusalem or otherwise suggesting Palestinian affiliations. The most striking find in this area was the stone that, according to its inscription, was connected with the miracle at Cana. For this phenomenon see Sp. Lampros, 'Ὁ ἐξ Ἑλατείας Λίθος ἀπὸ Κανᾶ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, Νέος Ἑλλ. 1 (1904), 172–85.

most probably intended to provide extra security, especially when, as in the present case, no horizontal strips were used. This side of the panel (Fig. 3) has a painted decoration of superimposed series consisting of wavy, red-brown brushstrokes on the gesso. The background of the main side was silver, as can be seen in the few extant vestiges; the border, on the other hand, was in all probability painted red. The contours of the haloes are incised with a double line; they were decorated with a rinceau pattern enhanced with red and black, as can be inferred from the surviving traces. The sigla of the Virgin's name, which have disappeared, were enclosed within roundels, also with incised circumferences. The icon does not retain any of its original inscriptions.

The Virgin, depicted half-length, represents a variant of the Hodegetria. Turned to her left, in a slightly more emphatic way than is usual for this iconographic type, she holds the Child in her left arm. Rather than gesturing with her right hand to the Child, she rests her hand in a lower position and holds between thumb and index finger the right heel of Christ, providing support for his left heel as well. The Virgin wears a light blue chiton, as can be inferred from the cuff on her right hand, and an ample red maphorion in three tones, the deepest of which, in red-black, serves to emphasize folds and outlines. Around the head of the figure the border of the maphorion is accentuated with a light brown band highlighted in gold. Double bands of the same color, with highlights in yellow-ochre producing the reflections of gold, also emphasize the hem of the maphorion and the right cuff. The maphorion has the customary star-shaped ornaments over the head and shoulders; these ornaments are very poorly preserved. A light blue head covering, decorated with dots and double transversal lines in red, holds the hair under the maphorion.

Christ, of a larger stature than is usual in depictions of the Virgin and Child, extends his right hand in blessing while holding with his left hand a long red scroll which he presses vertically upon the left thigh. He is dressed in an ample light blue tunic with broad highlights, which does not cover his crossed legs. Over the tunic he wears a flowing mantle in two tones of light brown, with yellow-ochre highlights imitating chrysography. The concentration of such highlights along the lower edge conveys the appearance of a golden hem. The mantle falls over Christ's left shoulder, forming a

loop, and is wrapped around the waist, covering with rich folds the lower left section of the body. Two wide bands in ochre that must have served as an underlayer for silver, outlined with black strips that are accentuated with single rows of white pearls, should be interpreted as clavi rather than as the shoulder bands of a transversal sash.

The Virgin's head is large and occupies the central axis, thus constituting the focal point of the compositional scheme of the panel. Her somewhat oblong face is dominated by large almond-shaped eyes with tiny pupils and large irises in two tones of brown, as well as by a long, straight nose slightly bulging at the tip. The Virgin's mouth is small and well-shaped. The modeling of the face conveys a luminous effect owing to a successful integration of the olive-green shading, the lighter flesh tones in ochre, and the red that is smoothly fused with ochre on the cheeks, the right section of the forehead, and the chin. Red in two tones is used to accentuate the eyelids, the shaded side, and the lower contour of the nose, as well as the contour of the chin. Red in a lighter tone on the lips provides a strong accent on the face. It is used also to mark the tear ducts. The modeling technique of the face reveals the special talent of the artist for the use of color and light. The olive shading, apparent along the contour of the open side of the face, around the eyes, at the bridge of the nose and on either side, as well as on the neck, creates a *sfumato* effect. Moreover, the luminous quality of the flesh tones is accentuated by a free handling of the highlights that form continuous shapes, thus contributing to a lively interaction of the adjacent tonalities. The special modeling technique used in this icon is illustrated in the rendering of the Virgin's neck where the collarbone is exposed, as well as in her elegant, slightly mannered hands. The painterly technique of the icon is also revealed in the rendering of the Virgin's maphorion, which conveys a dynamic effect through the juxtaposition and the interpenetration of angular areas of local color and shading. This play of colored shapes has little to do with the organic reality of the body, which is flat and insubstantial.

Unlike the depiction of the Virgin, Christ's head is small, while the body is unusually large. His long curly hair has a reddish tonality. The modeling technique of the face is similar to that employed in the face of the Virgin, but, in contrast to the refined quality of the physiognomic traits of the Virgin, Christ's face has a distorted appearance accen-

tuated by the impression that the lower right section is missing. It is worth noting that the contour of Christ's face was drawn correctly by means of an incised line, but this guideline was not taken into consideration in the actual painting of this section. Christ's neck is exposed to show the collarbone, as in the depiction of the Virgin. His hands convey a dynamic quality; the right hand in particular is freely modeled, assuming a calyx-like form. The hands and the bare legs and feet of the Child illustrate the special way in which flesh tones were modeled, thus achieving a luminous effect.

In the rendering of Christ's figure several clumsy details can be pointed out. In the first place, the relation of the garments to the body is quite artificial and conveys a mannerist effect. An awkward appearance, for example, is produced by the thick, dark brown line across the mantle, which was meant to outline the upper contour of the left thigh. A mannerist quality is, moreover, produced by the interconnection of the Virgin's right hand and Christ's feet, an effect that probably played a part in the decision to replace this particular depiction of the Virgin with a more traditional version of the Hodegetria at a later period. A certain unbalance is created in addition by the impression that the Virgin's maphorion has been given special emphasis in the lower right section, an impression that is, however, largely due to the missing parts of her garment in the corresponding section on the left.

A detailed iconographic and stylistic study of the icon provides strong evidence for establishing its date as well as its cultural context. In terms of iconography the most revealing details concern the rendering of the Christ child. Among these features especially important are: (a) the way Christ's mantle is wrapped around his body so as to leave exposed large sections of the tunic, (b) his bare legs, and (c) the fact that the Virgin touches his feet.

All three details indicate an attempt to abandon the traditional antique garb which, in Byzantine art, was considered especially appropriate to depictions of the Christ child in most scenic representations from the Gospels and, even more, in hieratic iconic schemes, such as that of the Virgin and Child. From the end of the twelfth century on, in many depictions of the Virgin and Child, this rendering gave way to a more intimate approach that implied an attire of Christ more suitable for an infant. Thus, in the mosaic panel of the Virgin

and Child at Monreale,<sup>3</sup> datable to the last quarter of the twelfth century, Christ wears only a short tunic showing a transversal sash around the waist and vertical stripes over the shoulders. Moreover, in the fresco panel of the Virgin Arakiotissa in the homonymous church near Lagoudera,<sup>4</sup> of 1192, in Cyprus, Christ wears only a short tunic that leaves one leg bare; the tunic is also decorated here with a transversal sash and shoulder bands of the same material. A frequent characteristic of depictions of the Virgin and Child in thirteenth-century Cypriot painting is, in fact, this transversal sash with bands extending over the shoulders of the Child. For instance, we see it on the icon of the Hodegetria from the Church of the Panagia tou Moutoulla (Fig. 5), on the panel with a variant of the Kykkotissa from the Church of the Virgin at Asinou, and on the panel of the seated Hodegetria from the Church of St. Cassianos in Nicosia.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the Child's legs are left bare in some of the relevant thirteenth-century pictorial material in the Island, for instance, on the icon of the Virgin and Child of the "mixed iconographic type" from the Church of the Chrysaliniotissa in Nicosia<sup>6</sup> and on that of the Hodegetria from the Panagia tou Moutoulla. Moreover, both the transversal sash with the shoulder bands and the bare legs characterize two icons at Sinai, which may be dated to the thirteenth century and should, in my opinion, be connected with the artistic production of Cyprus.<sup>7</sup> In all these examples Christ's attire also includes an overgarment which, however, has lost the appearance of the antique himation shown in the hieratic Byzantine depictions and looks rather like a mantle or a cape.

The iconographic features in the rendering of the Christ child that were described above are sometimes encountered in depictions of the Virgin and Child that can be dated from the thirteenth century on and that are found in other parts of the

<sup>3</sup>O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London, 1949), fig. 111. E. Kitzinger, *Monreale* (Palermo, 1960), pl. 102.

<sup>4</sup>A. and J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus* (London, 1985), fig. 85.

<sup>5</sup>For the icon from Moutoullas, see A. Papageorgiou, *Byzantine Icons of Cyprus*, Benaki Museum (Athens, 1976) (hereafter Papageorgiou, *Byzantine Icons*), no. 13, p. 48, with illustration. For the icons with a variant of the Kykkotissa from Asinou and the seated Hodegetria from St. Cassianos, see A. Papageorgiou, *Icons of Cyprus* (London, 1969) (hereafter Papageorgiou, *Icons*), illus. on pp. 20, 21, and 34.

<sup>6</sup>Papageorgiou, *Icons*, illus. on p. 18.

<sup>7</sup>These two icons are discussed in D. Mouriki, "Thirteenth-Century Icon Painting in Cyprus," *Griffon* (Gennadius Library, Athens), n.s. 1 (1985-86), 63-66.

Byzantine world. For instance, the depiction of the Virgin and Child, datable to the early thirteenth century, which was revealed recently after the removal of a seventeenth-century layer of painting on an icon in the Byzantine Museum,<sup>8</sup> shows the Child with a sleeveless tunic that leaves the legs bare and exposes the transversal sash with vertical stripes; this type of the Virgin and Child shows a strong connection with the iconographic type of the Kykkotissa. On the other hand, the baby's tunic with the characteristic bands, and even more the bare legs of the Child, are encountered very often in Ducento panel paintings in connection with various iconographic types of the Madonna and Child.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, it can be argued that these details were disseminated through a specific iconographic type of Eastern origin.

A survey of the relevant pictorial material produced in the eastern Mediterranean in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries clearly gives priority to Cyprus as the source of the details described above. A baby's attire for Christ in the depictions of the Virgin and Child constitutes an integral part of the iconographic type of the Virgin Kykkotissa, named after the miraculous prototype which, according to tradition, was sent by Alexios I Komnenos to the Monastery of Kykkos in Cyprus in 1092.<sup>10</sup> The original image of the icon at Kykkos is

<sup>8</sup>M. Chatzidakis, "L'évolution de l'icône aux 11e–13e siècles et la transformation du temple," *Actes du Xe Congrès International d'Etudes Byzantines, Athènes, 1976*, I (Athens, 1979) (hereafter Chatzidakis, "Evolution de l'icône"), 359–60, pl. XLVI.22. Catalogue of the exhibition for the Centennial (above, note 1), no. 4, p. 15, with color illustration (entry by M. Chatzidakis). In both instances the icon is dated to the late 12th century.

<sup>9</sup>E.g., J. H. Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena* (Princeton, 1964), figs. 7, 31–32.

<sup>10</sup>The earliest reference to this icon is found in the 16th-century chronicle of Makhairas: *Leontios Makhairas. Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus entitled "Chronicle"*, ed. and trans. R. M. Dawkins, I (Oxford, 1932), §37, pp. 36–38. For the cult and the iconography of the Kykkotissa, see R. Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus* (London, 1956), 302–5. K. Weitzmann, "Crusader Icons and la Maniera greca," in *Il Medio Oriente e l'Occidente nell'Arte del XIII Secolo. Atti del XXIV Congresso C.I.H.A. Bologna 1979*, ed. H. Belting (Bologna, 1982), 73–74. Idem, "Crusader Icons and Maniera Greca," *Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*, SBWien, Philos.-hist.Kl., 432, ed. I. Hutter and H. Hunger (Vienna, 1984), 149–51. P. Santa Maria Mannino, "La Vergine 'Kykkotissa' in due icone laziali del Duecento," *Roma Anno 1300. Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Storia dell'Arte Medievale, Roma 1980* (Rome, 1983), 487–92. V. Pace, "Presenze e influenze cipriote nella pittura duecentesca italiana," *CorsiRav* 32 (1985), 272. Most of the iconographic peculiarities of the Kykkotissa type probably originated in a narrative scene, such as the Presentation. The shoulder bands, for instance, complement the Child's attire already in the illustration of this scene in the Menologion of Basil. See *Il Menologio di Basilio II (Cod. Vaticano Greco 1613)*, II (plates) (Turin, 1907), p. 287.

hidden behind a silver revetment of the post-Byzantine period, but the type may be reconstructed from the earliest extant copy in the well-known icon at Sinai<sup>11</sup> and also from later copies in Cyprus and elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> In this type the Child wears only a short sleeveless tunic, allowing arms and legs to be exposed and revealing that he kicks with his left foot. In the Sinai panel the tunic exhibits two narrow stripes in the form of clavi reaching down to the lower hem, while in the later copies we see a sash around the waist or a sash with additional bands extending over the shoulders. In all the latter instances this feature is differentiated from the tunic in both texture and color. That this particular type of the Virgin and Child enjoyed wide popularity both in the Island and in other areas—including Sinai, Russia, and Italy—may account for the frequent appearance of the details under discussion in the East and in the West, especially from the thirteenth century on.

A further iconographic feature worthy of note in the rendering of the Virgin and Child in the panel in the Byzantine Museum is the position of the Virgin's right hand so as to hold between thumb and index finger the right heel of Christ. This feature, in several variants, enjoyed a vast popularity in Ducento paintings, suggesting that it is an element of Western iconography.<sup>13</sup> However, it occasionally appears in Byzantine examples of an earlier period, thus indicating that it originated in the East. For instance, in the apse decorations of the Churches of St. George at Kurbinovo, of 1191, and of the Hagioi Anargyroi in Kastoria, of roughly the same date,<sup>14</sup> the Virgin, represented in the type of seated Hodegetria, touches the Child's heels with both hands. This detail is not found, so far as I know, in the extant late Comnenian painting in Cyprus, but the fact that the stylistic trend illustrated in the two Macedonian fresco cycles enjoyed wide popularity in the Island—which can be inferred from the surviving pictorial material—adds support to the hypothesis that the detail in question was adopted there as well. A fur-

<sup>11</sup>G. and M. Soteriou, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ*, I (Athens, 1956), figs. 54 and 55; *ibid.*, II (1958), pp. 73–75. For a color illustration, see K. Weitzmann et al., *Les icônes* (Paris, 1982), illus. on p. 48.

<sup>12</sup>For later copies in Cyprus, see Papageorgiou, *Icons*, illus. on pp. 21 and 48. For Italian examples, see Santa Maria Mannino, "La Vergine 'Kykkotissa'".

<sup>13</sup>E.g., E. B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting. An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949) (repr. New York, 1976), no. 25 p. 45, no. 28 p. 45, no. 45 p. 49, no. 66 p. 53, no. 123 p. 65, etc.

<sup>14</sup>L. Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo* (Brussels, 1975), II (plates), figs. 9 and 11.

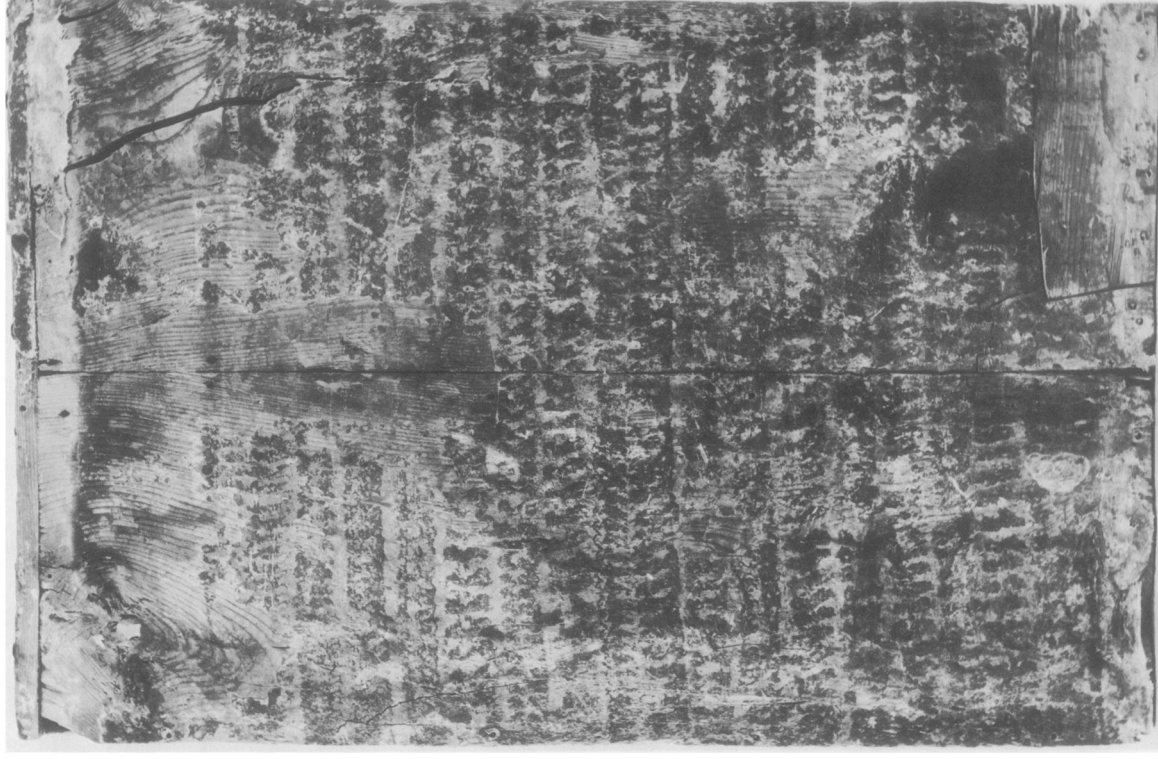


1. A variant of the Hodegetria, Athens, Byzantine Museum  
(photo: Byzantine Museum, Athens)





2. The Virgin Hodegetria, later layer of painting of the icon of Figure 1, Monastery of Jerusalem, Boeotia (photo: First Ephoreia of Byzantine Antiquities, Athens)



3. The icon of Figure 1, reverse (photo: First Ephoreia of Byzantine Antiquities, Athens)



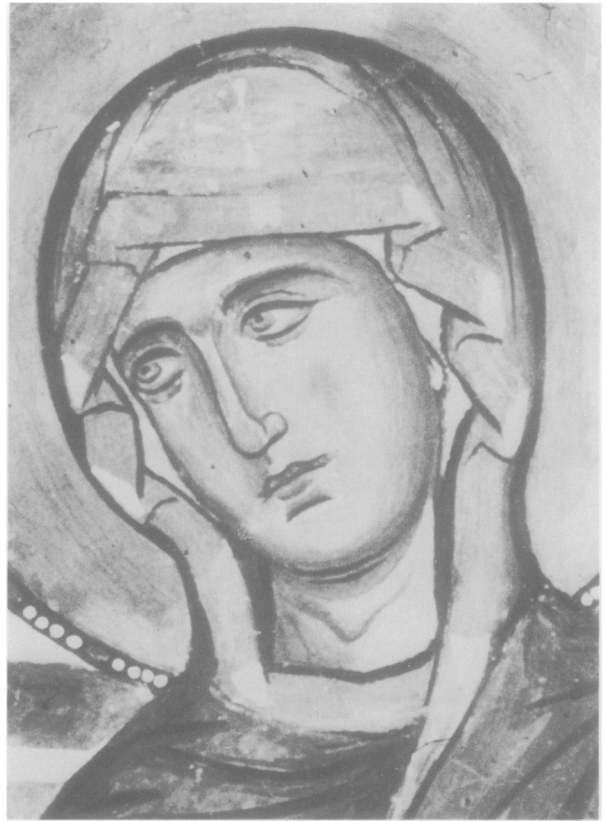
4. The Praying Virgin from St. Neophytos near Paphos  
(photo: A. Papageorgiou)



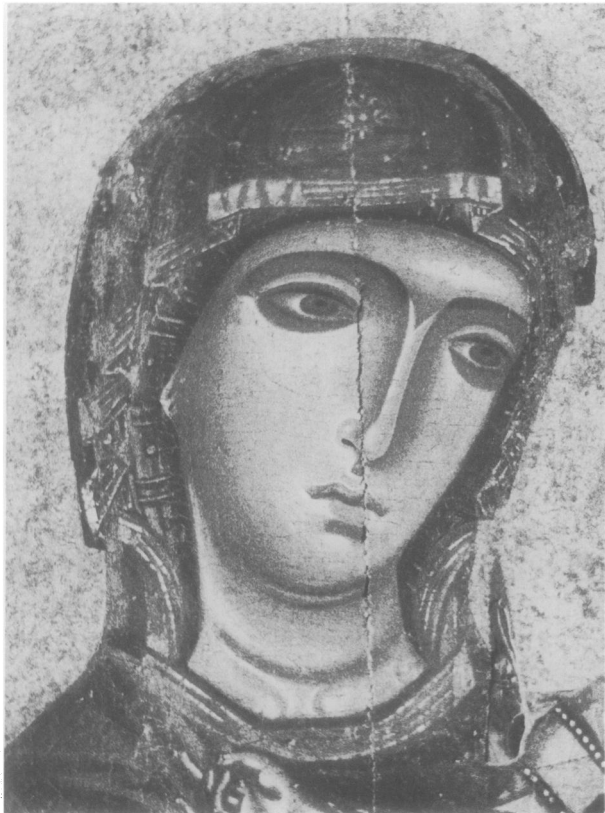
5. The Virgin Hodegetria from the Church of the Panagia tou  
Moutoulla (photo: A. Papageorgiou)



6. The Virgin Hodegetria from the Church of the Panagia tou Arakos near Lagoudera, detail (photo: A. Papageorgiou)



8. The Virgin in the Nativity, detail, fresco in the Church of the Panagia tou Arakos, 1192 (photo: A. Papageorgiou)



7. A variant of the Hodegetria, detail of Figure 1, Athens, Byzantine Museum (photo: E. Tsagati)



9. The Virgin Hodegetria, detail, Grottaferrata, Church of the Monastery of St. Neilus (photo: Musei Vaticani)



ther telling example, of an even earlier date, is represented by the standing Hodegetria depicted between John the Baptist and St. Basil in the ivory at Dumbarton Oaks, which has been assigned to the second half of the tenth century.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the customary rendering of this type, with the left hand of the Virgin touching Christ's leg, this particular work shows the Virgin holding Christ's left foot in a firm grip. The examples mentioned above anticipate a wide possibility of experimentation, which will result in a large number of related variants, especially from the thirteenth century on. This was due to the general freedom of artistic expression of the period, which was a consequence of the political and cultural upheavals in the eastern Mediterranean. A striking example is illustrated in the mosaic variant of the Hodegetria on the templon of the Porta Panagia at Pyli near Trikala in Thessaly, a monument that was constructed around 1285 under the patronage of John Doukas, the ruler of this region.<sup>16</sup> Here the Virgin supports with her right hand the Child's right leg, covered now by the mantle as in the traditional depictions of the Hodegetria Dexiokratousa, but her left hand, passing behind Christ's bare left leg, grasps the Child's right foot. In fact, during this period we witness a tendency to depart from the traditional iconographic types of the Virgin and Child which followed the celebrated miraculous archetypes of earlier times. This departure is expressed in a combination of features stemming from different iconographic types of the Virgin. A relevant example is seen in the Byzantine Museum panel where we find features deriving from at least three iconographic types, that is, of the Hodegetria, the Kykkotissa, and the Hagiosoritissa. An influence of the last type in particular is reflected in the pose of the Virgin turning to the right in a more emphatic way than is usually the case in the depictions of the Hodegetria, in the ample folds of her maphorion with a slight emphasis on the lower right edge, and, above all, in the awkward manner in which the Virgin and the Child are related.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> K. Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, III, *Ivories and Steatites* (Washington, D.C., 1972), no. 26, pp. 60–65, pls. 6 and xxxix. For the particular position of the Virgin's left hand, see *ibid.*, p. 63. It is quite possible that the iconographic feature in question originated in a narrative scene, such as the Adoration of the Magi. For a relevant example, see the mosaic representation of the scene at Daphni. G. Millet, *Le Monastère de Daphni* (Paris, 1899), pl. xiii.

<sup>16</sup> For color reproductions of this work, see Weitzmann et al., *Icons*, illus. on p. 165.

<sup>17</sup> A good parallel of this type is offered by the icon from St. Neophytos (Fig. 4).

Such details rob the compositional scheme of its clarity and are in sharp contrast to the refined quality, seen especially in the Virgin's face.

In the iconographic rendering of the Byzantine Museum panel a few more details deserve special comment. One of them is the fact that the collarbone is prominent in the depictions of both the Virgin and the Child. This distinctive feature, which occurs in some pictorial works of the late Comnenian period, is especially popular in Cypriot painting of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This detail is illustrated, for instance, in the icons of Christ from Lagoudera, of the Angel from the Chrysostomos Monastery near Koutsovendis, of Christ from the Church of the Virgin at Moutoullas, as well as in the fresco depictions of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel from the apse of the Church of the Antiphonites at Kalogrea near Kyrenia, and of St. George on horseback in the south conch of the narthex in the Church of the Virgin at Asinou.<sup>18</sup> Christ's long hair is a far less common feature. Nevertheless, this detail is found consistently in the pictorial examples of the Virgin Kykkotissa, starting with the earliest copy at Sinai, as well as in a few other depictions of the Virgin and Child that show an indebtedness to this very type, such as in the recently uncovered layer of painting on an icon, also at the Byzantine Museum.<sup>19</sup>

A further detail that deserves our attention is the red scroll held by Christ, which enjoyed much less popularity than the white scroll. It may be recalled that the red scroll appears to be a favorite feature in Cypriot painting of the late twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, as shown, for instance, by the fresco of the Virgin Arakiotissa, of 1192, in the homonymous church near Lagoudera, as well as by the icons with the Hodegetria from the same church, the variant of the Kykkotissa from the Church of the Virgin at Asinou, and the seated Hodegetria from St. Cassianos in Nicosia. One may wonder whether the popularity of this particular feature in Cypriot painting has any relation to the prototype of the Kykkotissa, as indicated by

<sup>18</sup> For the panels from Lagoudera and from Moutoullas, see Papageorgiou, *Byzantine Icons*, nos. 7 and 14, with illustrations; for the panel with the angel from the Monastery of Chrysostomos, see *idem*, *Icons*, illus. on pp. 14 and 15. The Archangel Gabriel in the Antiphonites and St. George at Asinou are illustrated in Stylianou, *Painted Churches*, figs. 283 and 70.

<sup>19</sup> Chatzidakis, "Evolution de l'icône," pl. xlv.22. On the other hand, Christ has long hair in some depictions of the Virgin and Child that are not related to the iconographic type of the Kykkotissa. Such is the case, for instance, of the icon in mosaic with the Hodegetria Dexiokratousa at Sinai (K. Weitzmann et al., *A Treasury of Icons* [New York, 1966], illus. on p. 36).

the substantial number of copies that exhibit the very same detail.

A prominent feature in the attire of the Christ child in the Byzantine Museum panel is seen in the broad bands of a luxurious material outlined with pearls. An ornamental approach to the clavi of the chiton of the Christ child is attested to in pictorial works from the thirteenth century on and in areas that had been exposed to Western influence. For instance, the tunic of Christ is characterized by a clavus decorated with pearls twice in the Cypriot frescoes of the Panagia tou Moutoulla, of 1280.<sup>20</sup>

As was the case with the iconography, a stylistic study of the Byzantine Museum panel also suggests a close connection with Cyprus. Conspicuous features in the modeling of the faces are very light flesh tones, the restricted use of green shading, and the dominant role of red used as both touches on the face and as lines emphasizing the eyelids, nose, and contour of the chin. This vermilion red combined with the light luminous areas contributes much to the decorative quality of the painting. All these features occur constantly in Cypriot pictorial works of the late twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. Characteristic examples from the earlier period are the pair of icons of Christ and the Hodegetria from Lagoudera. From the late thirteenth century, the panels of Christ and the Hodegetria from Moutoullas, the icon of St. Paul from the Church of the Chrysaliniotissa in Nicosia, the icon of St. Marina from Pedoulas, the icon with a variant of the Kykkotissa from Asinou, and the large panel of St. Nicholas with scenes of his life from the homonymous church near Kakopetria may be cited.<sup>21</sup> The features described above also

appear in Cypriot mural painting of the same period,<sup>22</sup> giving the pictorial works produced in the Island a homogeneous character. In addition, the eyes of the figures in the Byzantine Museum panel are characterized by small pupils and large, light-colored irises, a common feature of twelfth- and thirteenth-century icon painting in Cyprus. Moreover, the decorative character of our panel, which is based mainly on the use of vivid colors (especially red) and their function as accents, is also a distinctive feature of Cypriot painting of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>23</sup> What does not conform to the typical local idiom is the more painterly approach seen in the Byzantine Museum panel.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, the closest parallels in terms of style are found in the Cypriot material that can be dated close to 1200. The most obvious comparisons may be drawn with the icons of the Hodegetria from Lagoudera (Fig. 6) and the Praying Virgin from St. Neophytos (Fig. 4). The slightly asymmetrical features and softer contours of the Virgin's face in the Byzantine Museum panel are closer to those of the Hodegetria from Lagoudera than to those of the Praying Virgin from St. Neophytos which retains more angular and ascetic features reflecting the tastes of a somewhat earlier period. It should be recalled that the chronology of these two icons has been established on the basis of their stylistic affinity with dated fresco cycles in the Island, mainly that in the Panagia tou Arakos (1192).<sup>25</sup> The juxtaposition of the face of the Virgin in the Byzantine Museum icon with the faces of the Virgin in the icons from Lagoudera and St. Neophytos, as well as with the face of the Virgin in the Nativity fresco in the Panagia tou Arakos (Fig. 8), reveals a stylistic affinity which, in the case of our icon, the panel from Lagoudera, and the fresco in the same church, is revealed also in the

<sup>20</sup> D. Mouriki, "The Wall Paintings of the Church of the Panagia at Moutoullas, Cyprus," *Byzanz und der Westen* (above, note 10), figs. 2 and 10. An ornamental approach to the clavus of the tunic of the Christ child is also noticeable in Sinai icons that have been connected with Crusader activity, e.g., the small panel with the Hodegetria Dexiokratousa. Weitzmann et al., *Icons*, illus. on p. 219. Here the clavus is decorated with gold lozenges.

<sup>21</sup> For color illustrations of the icons of Christ from Lagoudera, the variant of the Kykkotissa from Asinou, and St. Nicholas from the homonymous church near Kakopetria, see Papageorgiou, *Icons*, 3, 20, and 35. Light flesh tones and vermilion red to emphasize facial features also appear in a substantial group of Cypriot panel paintings of a later period, especially those that were not strongly influenced by the Palaeologan style. A panel depicting the Hodegetria Dexiokratousa, which is currently exhibited in the White Tower in Thessaloniki, also bears stylistic similarities to the Byzantine Museum panel. Apart from the conspicuous role of red on the faces, we may also note the distorted appearance of the Child's face as in our icon. For a brief description and a color illustration of this panel, which has been dated to the end of the 13th–beginning of the 14th cen-

tury, see Θεσσαλονίκη. *Ἱστορία καὶ Τέχνη* (exhibition at the White Tower in Thessaloniki) (Athens, 1986), no. iv.22, pp. 85–86.

<sup>22</sup> Among the late 12th-century wall paintings, characteristic examples are provided by some faces in the bema and cell of the Hermitage of St. Neophytos (1183) and the Church of the Panagia tou Arakos (1192). The stylistic features in question are illustrated especially in the 13th-century fresco cycles of the Catholikon of St. John Lampadistis at Kalopanayiotis and of the Panagia tou Moutoulla (1280).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. S. Boyd, "The Church of the Panagia Amasgou, Monagri, Cyprus, and Its Wallpaintings," *DOP* 28 (1974), 321.

<sup>24</sup> A notable exception in terms of a very painterly rendering is the 13th-century depiction of the Crucifixion of the double-sided icon from the Church of St. Luke in Nicosia. For a color illustration of this painting, see Papageorgiou, *Icons*, 27.

<sup>25</sup> For a commentary on these two panels, see Papageorgiou, *Byzantine Icons*, nos. 4 and 6.

predilection for light flesh tones and the decorative handling of vermilion red to accentuate facial traits. All of these faces, moreover, share the melancholy mood that characterizes also facial expressions in some Byzantine pictorial works around 1200,<sup>26</sup> with an extreme example seen in the Hodegetria on one side of the double-sided icon from Kastoria.<sup>27</sup> This gentle melancholy in our icon reflects the more emotional approach that pervades the contemporary art of both East and West during this period.<sup>28</sup> At this point it should be noted that, besides the Cypriot pictorial material mentioned above, the only other work which, in my opinion, bears a close stylistic affinity to the icon in the Byzantine Museum is the panel of the Hodegetria in the Church of the Monastery of St. Neilus at Grottaferrata (Fig. 9). This work, datable to the early thirteenth century, has been attributed by Kurt Weitzmann to the Crusader group from the Holy Land, while Valentino Pace has suggested recently a Cypriot origin for it.<sup>29</sup>

In the Byzantine Museum panel the relaxation in mood and a more fluid treatment of the modeling also point to a date at the beginning of the thirteenth century.<sup>30</sup> In fact, these features are combined with an archaizing approach to the body which, compared to the large head of the Virgin, is narrow and has a flat appearance, as is also the case in Cypriot painting throughout the thirteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Such an approach is explained by the fact that the Island was cut off from the up-to-date stylistic trends stemming from Constantinople. Thirteenth-century pictorial material in Cyprus seems to have adopted, on the other hand, some of the flat linear elements of the artistic tradition of various Eastern groups that were established in large numbers in the Island during the Lusignan period.<sup>32</sup> It is also probable that the manifest pred-

ilection for vivid colors, especially red, and the decorative character of Cypriot painting during this period may also be explained by such Eastern influences.<sup>33</sup>

In order to gain further insights into the cultural context of the Byzantine Museum panel, a few more details, technical for the most part, require brief consideration. The background in both the thirteenth- and the fifteenth-century layers of painting was silver, a feature that we encounter constantly in panel paintings in Cyprus<sup>34</sup> but rarely elsewhere. From the extant vestiges of color, it may safely be deduced that the nimbi of the Virgin and Child were decorated with floral designs enhanced with red and possibly other colors. This feature, characteristic of a Western taste, could provide a further argument in favor of the production of the icon outside of the orbit of the traditional Byzantine culture of the period.

An additional technical detail that may assist us in establishing the cultural context of the panel is the use of gesso relief in the decoration of the nimbi, this time only in the fifteenth-century layer that bears a traditional representation of the Hodegetria (Fig. 2). As is well known, the pastiglia technique was applied extensively in Cypriot panel paintings from the early thirteenth century on, a fact that may give support to the hypothesis that this technique originated in the Island in the early Lusignan period.<sup>35</sup>

Another notable detail in the icon under discussion is the special treatment of the reverse side of the panel bearing, as indicated above, superimposed series of wavy brushstrokes in red-brown against a white painted background (Fig. 3). This type of decoration on the back of an icon has not been detected, to my knowledge, in Greece but is

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., an icon with the Praying Virgin at Sinai; Weitzmann et al., *Treasury of Icons* (above, note 19), p. xvi, pl. 31.

<sup>27</sup> Chatzidakis, "Evolution de l'icône," p. 359, pl. xlv.21.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. K. Weitzmann, "Byzantium and the West around the Year 1200," *The Year 1200: A Symposium* (New York, 1975), 66–67.

<sup>29</sup> K. Weitzmann, "Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom," *DOP* 20 (1966), p. 75, fig. 52. V. Pace, "Presenze e influenze cipriote" (above, note 10), pp. 265, 268, figs. 4 and 5.

<sup>30</sup> A similar dating has been proposed for this icon by M. Achimastou-Potamianou, catalogue of the exhibition (above, note 1), 16.

<sup>31</sup> For a stylistic study of 13th-century icon painting in Cyprus, see Mouriki, "Thirteenth-Century Icon Painting" (above, note 7), *passim*.

<sup>32</sup> For the presence of different ethnic groups, with special emphasis on the Latins and the Syrians, in Cyprus during the 13th century, see J. Richard, "Le peuplement latin et syrien en

Chypre au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *BF* 7 (1979), 157–73 (rpr. in J. Richard, *Croisés, missionnaires et voyageurs* [London, 1983], no. vii), with earlier bibliography.

<sup>33</sup> These features often characterize pictorial works assigned to artists of different Eastern Christian backgrounds. For instance, Syriac miniatures illustrate these tendencies. For this material, see J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient*, I (text) (Paris, 1964), *passim*; II (plates), pls. 70, 71.1, 73, 74, etc.

<sup>34</sup> Icons of the 12th and 13th centuries in Cyprus have backgrounds either in silver or in a combination of silver and gold. In addition, a few panels datable to the 13th century have red backgrounds. It may be recalled that silver and gold are also applied on the gesso relief decoration that is a special Cypriot characteristic from the 13th century on. For examples illustrating all these approaches, see Papageorgiou, *Icons*, *passim*.

<sup>35</sup> See esp. M. S. Frinta, "Raised Gilded Adornment of the Cypriot Icons and the Occurrence of the Technique in the West," *Gesta* 20 (1981), 336–37.

often found, in several variations, among the icons preserved at Sinai, as well as in a few icons in Cyprus, thus indicating formulas of local workshops.

The Cypriot affiliations of this thirteenth-century panel depicting a variant of the Hodegetria in the Byzantine Museum can be corroborated by the technical and stylistic characteristics of the later layer of painting that replaced the original image in the fifteenth century (Fig. 2). Aside from the adoption of the gesso ornament for the nimbi of the Virgin and Child—a typical Cypriot feature, as noted above—the grid pattern enclosing the star-shaped motifs of the nimbi corresponds to one of the standard ways of decoration of the background in Cypriot icons.<sup>36</sup> In terms of style, the later painting reveals the harsh linear approach and the slightly prosaic quality that we often encounter in pictorial material from the Island in this period.<sup>37</sup> A preference for the use of red in faces and garments, as well as the decorative quality of some of the iconographic details (for instance, the garments of the Christ child), also point to the Cypriot cultural milieu.

A final question concerns the use of the icon under discussion. The relatively large size of the panel and its iconographic subject make it probable that it was part of a pair of icons, with the other panel bearing a depiction of Christ. For such a scheme the Cypriot material provides the earliest extant examples, the other early evidence being derived from the inventories and typika of monasteries. The pairing of these icons, their large size, and the subjects represented on them have suggested arguments for the initial placement of such panels at the intercolumniations of templa;<sup>38</sup>

the question is, in my opinion, still open to discussion.<sup>39</sup> As regards our panel, an area that has been cut away from the bottom in the center indicates that this icon was used, for some period at least, for processions, a practice for which the Cypriot material also provides ample evidence from the late twelfth century on.<sup>40</sup>

The iconographic, stylistic, and technical study of the icon depicting a variant of the Hodegetria in the Byzantine Museum points to a Cypriot origin. We may thus assume that the panel in question reached the Monastery of Jerusalem in Boeotia as a gift from Sinai when the former was a metochion of the Monastery of St. Catherine. It can be supposed that this icon was either brought to Sinai from Cyprus or painted at the monastery by a Cypriot artist. Either assumption gains support from the rather close contacts between Sinai and Cyprus from the thirteenth century on, as can be inferred from Latin sources,<sup>41</sup> as well as by the iconographic and stylistic affinities between some icons from Sinai and pictorial material preserved in the Island.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> E.g., Papageorgiou, *Icons*, illus. on pp. 18, 21, 39, 54, and 57.

<sup>37</sup> Parallels may be drawn with a number of Cypriot panels that can be dated in the same period. See *ibid.*, illus. on pp. 39, 55, and 57.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Chatzidakis, "Evolution de l'icône," 358.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. A. W. Epstein, "The Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier: Templon or Iconostasis?" *JBA* 134 (1981), esp. 24–27.

<sup>40</sup> E.g., the icons of the Hodegetria from Lagoudera and of the Praying Virgin and Christ from St. Neophytos.

<sup>41</sup> The relevant sources have been published by G. Hofmann, "Sinai und Rom," *OrChr* 9 (1927), 218–99. *Idem*, "Lettere pontificie edite ed inedite intorno ai monasteri del Monte Sinai," *OCP* 17 (1951), 283–303. A. Mercati, "Nuovi documenti pontifici sui monasteri del Sinai e del monte Athos," *ibid.*, 18 (1952), 89–112. A brief account of this documentation has been included in K. Amantos, *Σύντομος Ἱστορία τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς τοῦ Σινᾶ* (Ἑλληνικά 3, Supplement) (Thessaloniki, 1953), esp. 35–39. See also Mouriki, "Thirteenth-Century Icon Painting" (above, note 7), 72–74.

<sup>42</sup> For this issue, see Mouriki (above, note 7), 63–71.